

County Of Erie
Office Of
County Executive
Barry Grossman



Public Safety Newsletter January/February 2012 – Vol. 11

As 2012 is ushered in and the new year begins, along with it comes a renewed sense of drive and ambition. As you will see in the following articles, the Public Safety Center remains on the path towards continued assurance that the citizens of Erie County receive the best possible service in their time of need.

Of note in this edition of the Public Safety Newsletter, the Administration is pleased to announce that west county municipalities (Albion Borough, Conneaut Township, Cranesville Borough, Franklin Township, Girard Borough and Township, Platea Borough, Elk Creek Township, and Springfield Township) have consolidated with Public Safety in an effort to enhance the services provided. This was a painstaking effort that encompassed many tasks and numerous man hours, which are outlined in the article submitted by Director Geers.

The Administration applauds the efforts of the Public Safety team, including our director, Todd Geers, along with his exceptional staff, Dale Robinson, Emergency Management Coordinator, John Grappy, 911 Coordinator, Abdul Osman, Chief Information Officer, as well as the shift commanders, dispatchers, and telecommunicators who continue to perform their duties with dedication and professionalism each and every day.

We would also like to recognize and honor Air Force Senior Airman Bryan Bell, who lost his life on January 5, 2012, while serving his country during Operation Enduring Freedom. Prior to enlisting in the service, Bryan Bell was a senior firefighter with the Fairfield Hose Company in Harborcreek, Pennsylvania, and a young man who dedicated his life to serve and protect. In the near future, this Administration will be presenting a plaque to Bryan's parents and step-parents in honor of their son.

Once again, the administration is pleased to provide you with an educational and informative newsletter in an effort to keep the citizens of Erie County apprised of the day to day operations, as well as the short and long term goals of the Public Safety Center.

Sincerely,

Barry Grossman
Erie County Executive

Barry Grossman
County Executive
Jerry Mifsud
Director of Administration
Todd Geers
Director of Public Safety
Dale Robinson
Emergency Management Coordinator
John Grappy
911 Coordinator
Abdul Osman
Chief Information Officer



A new year offers new opportunities for new energy and new ideas. Following a successful year of improvement and refinement to internal operations, the Erie County Department of Public Safety is now poised to pursue county-wide, safety-enhancing and -impacting projects outside the traditionally narrow focus of 9-1-1 operations. I am pleased to announce the 2012 Public Safety initiatives—a new focus for the new year.

Ready, affordable, and convenient training for new fire volunteers and old hands is critical to maintain fire response preparedness. Therefore, Public Safety will spearhead an initiative to revamp Erie County's own fire training grounds, Franklin Center.

Reliable communications faithfully connect first responders to each other and to the dispatch center. A new initiative for 2012 includes an in-depth examination of the current county radio system, evaluating unnecessary duplication and expense while ensuring optimal radio coverage for all user agencies. Another communication initiative is the deployment of vehicular computer systems for law enforcement agencies.

Declining federal and state monies for emergency management, coupled with increasing state mandates for improved programs, necessitates a paradigm shift from old ways of thinking. One idea underway today is to consolidate state-required, emergency management coordinator functions and responsibilities. Public Safety will champion this movement by working with municipal EMCs, offering assistance, support, and guidance to achieve synergy and savings.

When a fellow citizen calls 9-1-1 in need of an ambulance, I am certain, at their moment of need, the citizen cares not the name of the agency decal on the side panels of the ambulance. Rather, the citizen simply wants a fast response. With this concept in mind, Public Safety will broach the subject of a county-wide ambulance policy. Full-time stations? Ambulance consortium? Proximity dispatch? Unsure where our discussions will lead us, but the need for the journey is obvious and the time to begin is now.

Lastly, the other day a 9-1-1 call took several extra minutes to properly determine the caller's address; this delayed incident forcefully punctuates the need to create a standard road naming convention in Erie County. The troublesome road, spelled Ivarea in Franklin Township, is spelled Ivory in adjacent Elk Creek Township, yet the road is the same. Similarly, a nearby crossroad is spelled Carberry Road heading west of Ivarea, yet spelled Carbury Road going east. Lack of centralized road naming is commonplace in Erie County. To overcome this problem, our 9-1-1 call-takers ask, "Which city, borough, or township do you live in?" Asking this question helps us determine which Chestnut Street, for example, the caller lives on (By the way, there are ten Chestnut Streets in Erie County!), yet an extra and unnecessary question delays dispatch by precious seconds.

I am excited to undertake these important initiatives in 2012. I intend to convey the message, in greater detail, at municipal town hall meetings across the county. I look forward to seeing you there!

Todd Geers
Director of Public Safety

Erie County Hazmat Team Secures HMRF Grant



In October of 2011, the Erie County Hazardous Materials Response Team secured the Hazardous Materials Response Fund (HMRF) Grant for \$91,782. This was by far the largest amount the team has ever secured. The funding for this grant comes from the chemical fees that the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry collects from facilities within the state.

The team has used the grant in past years to reimburse normal operating expenses such as physicals, phones, pagers, vehicle maintenance, etc. The normal amounts for the grant were in the \$15,000- \$20,000 range.

When we received notification of the amount this year, we started to look at our equipment and capabilities, as well as the ability to work within our region and other states' hazmat teams. We looked at their equipment as compared to ours, and started to create a strategic plan for being able to mesh with these other teams. This process started over the last few years by doing training with the Crawford and Chautauqua County hazmat teams.

The first area that we looked at was upgrading our air monitoring capability. Our current cache of 4-gas meters is getting old and no longer in production. We also looked at our lack of ability to do monitoring for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN)/WMD in the air. To correct this deficiency, we ordered four new 4-gas/Photoionization Detector (PID) meters from RAE Systems, replacing our Mine Safety Appliances (MSA) Orions. These MultiRae Lites are wireless and will work with other teams Area RAEs on a wireless platform.



We also purchased a ChemPro100i from Environics. This meter will analyze the air and determine if and what chemicals may be present including WMD and industrial chemicals.



MPS Marks 13 Years Of Dedicated Service



This spring, Millcreek Paramedic Service (MPS) will be marking 13 years of continuous service in Millcreek Township. Our steady growth is a result of the partnership of our owners, the Millcreek Volunteer Fire Departments. Our service has grown with the demands of the community and today we boast a fleet of 15 emergency and non-emergency vehicles and a staff of over 70 Paramedics, EMT's and administrative support staff.

The success Millcreek Paramedic Service has achieved has given us the opportunity to expand and update our fleet of ambulances and wheelchair vans. In December, we purchased a new ambulance and a new wheelchair van. We were able to add these new vehicles to our fleet

through the revenues generated from our annual membership drive as well as the use of the 911 system. MPS, a non-profit organization, receives no tax funding so all revenues are generated from services rendered. When someone uses the 911 system in Millcreek Township, the revenues generated by billing insurance are directly invested back into the organization, and therefore Millcreek Township, to help ensure the highest care is given to the next resident who needs emergency medical care.

Millcreek Paramedic Service would like to remind the community that we also provide CPR and First Aid training to organizations in large and small group settings.

If you would like to become a member or to inquire about training opportunities, please call our office at 814-836-8677.

Dennis Suscheck
Customer Care Coordinator - MPS



Fun with Numbers!

Ever wonder how many people call 9-1-1 for help? In 2011, Erie County Department of Public Safety received 174,495 calls-for-service, which is a 9.94% increase over 2010. Of those calls, 152,818 were entered into CAD and 110,077 were dispatched to our user agencies. Breakdown by department is as follows:



PA Fish and Boat – 49	Fairview VFD – 841
Greenfield VFD – 120	Kearsarge VFD – 883
Platea VFD – 137	Girard PD – 1115
Cranesville VFD – 267	Central Erie County Paramedics – 1141
Wattsburg VFD – 290	Edinboro VFD – 1167
Mill Village VFD – 294	Perry Hi-Way VFD – 1221
Elgin-Beaverdam VFD – 320	Corry Ambulance – 1383
Franklin Township VFD – 334	West Lake VFD – 1483
Erie County Sheriff – 337	Union City PD – 1533
Springfield VFD – 384	Lake City PD - 1551
Lake City VFD – 458	West Ridge VFD – 1694
Kuhl Hose VFD – 477	Edinboro PD - 2472
Albion VFD – 498	West County Paramedics – 2596
McKean VFD – 576	Corry PD - 3377
Lake Shore VFD – 622	Erie FD – 4962
Waterford VFD – 679	Millcreek Paramedics – 5771
Girard VFD – 713	EmergCare – 11,087
Albion PD – 720	Erie PD – 56,160
Belle Valley VFD – 733	
Union City VFD – 797	
Corry FD – 835	



West County Municipalities Consolidate with Public Safety

Starting in May 2011, the Erie County Department of Public Safety (ECDoPS) commenced a preparation cycle to consolidate West County municipalities into the county's dispatch center. The preparation cycle was multi-faceted, involving numerous tasks and countless man-hours within the disciplines of legal, operations, technology, and training. During the summer months, representatives from each agency, and occasionally municipal leaders, met with the ECDoPS staff to discuss consolidation issues and concerns, to collect needed agency data and response plans, and to fine-tune and test the CAD-entered data (computer aided dispatch). For six months the West County agencies and ECDoPS worked tirelessly to implement the requisite consolidation steps. To frame the working agreement between ECDoPS and each municipality, a Memorandum of Understanding was executed defining roles and responsibilities expected of each party. County Executive Barry Grossman's active oversight of the process and intimate involvement in critical negotiations were instrumental in achieving a successful consolidation.

Operational tasks included configuring auto-dialer phone lines to route calls to the county dispatch center and a dedicated ring-down line with SCI Albion; redirecting municipality alarms to be answered by the dispatch center; transferring state-mandated permissions for police departments to access the national crime database; and, developing internal procedures to advise agencies of non-emergencies calls-for-service or messages.

The technology component of the consolidation plan was extensive and time-consuming. One technology element involved data entry into the CAD system of unique fire department response plans based on agency resources, geographical considerations, type of incident, and desired mutual aid response. Collectively, ECDoPS computer-coded 2052 unique fire data sets and 630 unique EMS data sets for 10 user agencies. The IT staff also offered the fire departments an opportunity to use CAD in ways never available to them before, such as pre-loading CAD with exact floor plans and blueprints of commercial structures in each agency's jurisdiction, hydrant locations, guidance on ingress methods into neighborhoods with restrictive entryways, utility shut-off locations, awareness of hazardous materials, and special evacuation instructions for residents living in group homes, to include such details as the number of residents residing in a particular room within the home and if extra fire personnel are needed to lift a resident into a wheelchair. Additionally, extensive testing of fire personnel pagers and radios was conducted to ensure reliable dispatch notification and communications with the West County agencies. To further enhance radio coverage in West County, ECDoPS will install a new antenna on a radio tower located on Mill Street in Girard Township.

Lastly, user agencies were invited to participate in working groups to create a county-wide, standardized radio dispatch procedures manual. The ECDoPS Training Coordinator subsequently provided in-house radio procedures training to the police officers and firefighters and training on how to remotely access the CAD system for run-times and incident information via an Internet portal called WebCAD.

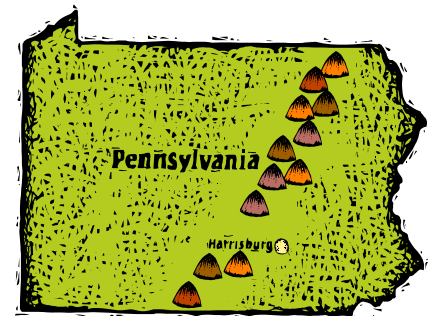
On December 01, 2011 at 10:00 AM, the following municipalities began receiving dispatch services by ECDoPS: Albion Borough, Conneaut Township, Cranesville Borough, Franklin Township, Girard Borough and Township, Platea Borough, Elk Creek Township, and Springfield Township. Four hours later, the largest fire incident in 2011 occurred in Edinboro, requiring fire apparatus from 15 fire departments, including all West County departments. The fire incident was dispatched without error, testament to the success of the consolidation and the professionalism of the ECDoPS staff.

Todd Geers
Director of Public Safety



Proposed Changes to Title 35

Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, also known as the Emergency Management Services Code, was last updated in 1989. Since the September 11th terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina, major changes in emergency management legislation have been effected at the federal level. Pennsylvania is now looking to update the state's emergency management law to reflect the federal changes. Over the past few years, several drafts have circulated and recently the Keystone Emergency Management Association and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) worked together to write the most current draft legislation.



Municipalities have traditionally had volunteer emergency management coordinators. With the changes over the year and the increase in duties and responsibilities, the position of municipal emergency management coordinator (EMC) is, depending upon the municipality, a part- to full-time job. The current Title 35 outlines what municipalities are responsible for, such as having an EMC, emergency operations plan (EOP), and an emergency operations center (EOC). The current wording in the new draft will allow PEMA to not only mandate the "what" but also the "how." Specifically, PEMA will be able "to promulgate, adopt and enforce rules, regulations, **standards**, directives, and orders." By being able to set standards, PEMA will be able to mandate what is in your municipal EOC, such as a generator, emergency food and water, radio and other communications equipment, and computers, with the costs being absorbed by the municipalities. PEMA will also be able to set and enforce "accreditation programs for county and local emergency management programs." Again PEMA will be able to set standards that the local EMA programs must meet. Where might these "standards" come from? Take some time to look at National Fire Protection Association 1600, Emergency Management Accreditation Program, and National Incident Management System (NIMS) and you will get an idea of the complexities and intricacies that will be required to meet these future standards.

Numerous changes will impact municipalities. Currently, Title 35 mandates that municipalities have an EOP, while the draft legislation indicates that municipalities will be responsible for "emergency management plans." Proposed standards will reflect current federal guidance such

as the Target Capabilities List (See <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/training/tcl.pdf>), the Universal Task Listing (See https://www.rkb.us/contentdetail.cfm?content_id=185590), and NIMS. Some additional planning that may be required are the development of continuity of operations and continuity of government plans, logistic plans, evacuation plans, sheltering plans, etc.



Besides an increase in emergency plan development, municipalities will have to undertake critical infrastructure protection activities such as identification of a municipality's critical infrastructure based on the 18 federal categories; threat and vulnerability surveys of the infrastructure and planning. This is a major program that will require the assistance of law enforcement and someone with a background in security.

The proposed changes also place a renewed emphasis on core concepts of emergency management such as the coordination of local resources to ensure that appropriate municipal resources are properly organized, trained and equipped and have adequate plans to safely and effectively accomplish the assigned missions; and the development of plans, policies, and procedures in consultation with law enforcement, fire and emergency personnel, and medical service providers that are consistent with commonwealth and county strategies, requirements, plans and templates.

Many may view the changes to Title 35 as just another unfunded mandate. But as John Jay stated in the Federalist Papers, "Among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their safety seems to be the first." When a disaster strikes it is too late to try and build a municipal emergency management program; this is analogous to buying insurance after a disaster to cover the damage! Erie County residents expect us to be able to respond to a disaster whether it is or is not an unfunded mandate.

Dale Robinson
EMA Coordinator



PA Fish & Boat Commission Update

The PA Fish and Boat Commission has been around since 1866 so it is hard to believe that in all those years of law enforcement, it was only in September of 2011 that Erie County Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) finally obtained a dispatch and centralized county control to communicate with.

WCO's enforcement efforts are different than standard police agencies. The changing seasons drive where WCO's need to patrol: in the winter, you will see them out in the middle of the bay



checking ice anglers; in the spring, they will be inland on the trout streams; in the summer, they are on boat patrol out to the international line; and in the fall, they work at all hours along the tributaries. The problem before a couple of months ago was that nobody knew where we were. WCO's encounter the same people other police agencies encounter.

As the supervisor for the Erie WCO's, I would like to personally thank Erie County Sheriff Bob Merski for allowing us access to ECSD radio frequencies and Todd Geers and his staff for making the seamless transition of our personnel onto the Erie County Public Safety dispatch system.

Lake Erie is a very demanding place to work and by having assets such as patrol vessel with experienced WCO's as vessel operators we hope to assist in responding to all emergencies on Lake Erie. This is a very positive step for the safety of the community and the safety of our officers in the field - thanks again.

Thomas Edwards, Jr.
NW Region - Assistant Regional Supervisor



Employee Spotlight

EMA Secretary Mary Richards Retires

After ten years of faithful service to Erie County as a 9-1-1 call-taker then as the Emergency Management Secretary, Mary Richards retired on January 21, 2012.

Mary provided clerical support to various programs within emergency management including the Hazardous Materials Safety Program, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Erie County HazMat Team, the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Additionally, Mary served as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Logistics Section Chief, helping ensure that equipment and supplies were placed into Knowledge Center and that the EOC logistics function flowed smoothly.



Mary shined brightly as an industrious and dedicated employee, especially during EOC exercises when inundated with resource requests. Whether filing, typing, mailing out letters, up-dating data, or making copies, Mary always did her work with a sense of pride and meaning. Mary's commitment to her community and our public safety mission is evident in the fact she will continue as a CERT volunteer. Enjoy your retirement, Mary.